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ABSTRACT

The goal of this booklet is to help teachers re-examine education for students with disabilities. It is intended to help clarify issues related to developing adaptive processes to include students with disabilities in general education classrooms. It begins by explaining the difference between mainstreaming, integration, and inclusion, how a general education teacher can be successful in including all children, and the role of a special education teacher in inclusive classrooms. Four basic principles are then outlined for including all children: (1) share responsibilities as a team; (2) meet on a regular basis; (3) develop priorities and plans; and (4) consider all ways of adapting activities to include children with disabilities. Appendices include a list of 28 resources on inclusive programming; information on goals, roles, and processes for helping individuals to work as a team; a meeting effectiveness checklist; strategies for including all students; and strategies for adapting curriculum. (CR)

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Perspectives on Effective Education

A Guide To Including All Children

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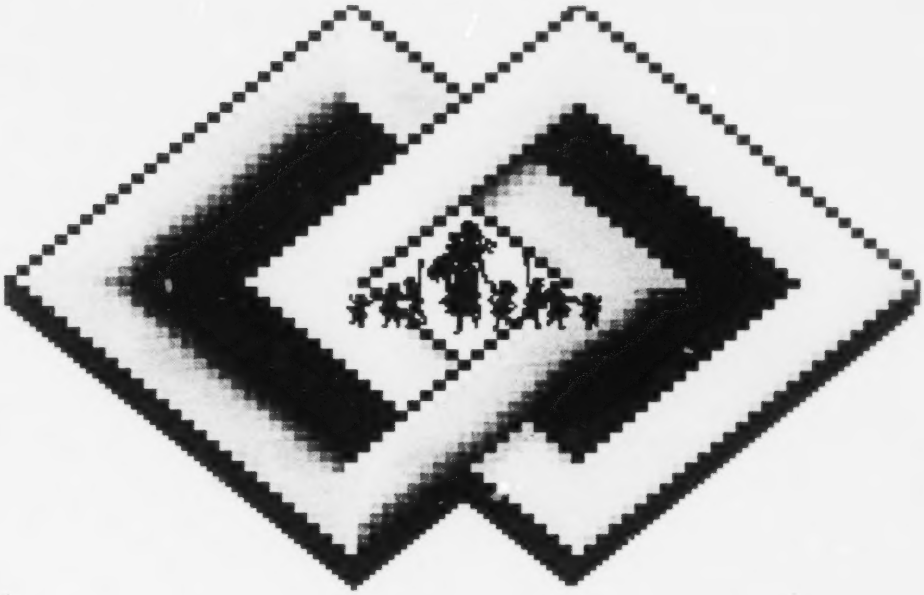
PERSPECTIVES ON EFFECTIVE EDUCATION

A Guide To Including All Children



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Indiana State University 1996

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Introduction

The goal of *Perspectives* is to help teachers reexamine education for students with disabilities. The first step is to note that inclusive practices support opportunities to improve educational outcomes for all students. Effective education should enhance academic achievement, promote positive communication and relationships with others, increase independence, and provide preparation for post school life. These are results considered appropriate and valuable for any student, including students with disabilities, in inclusive settings.

But how do you include a student with disabilities if you haven't been trained? And, where would you start if you wanted to be more "inclusive" with all students? The information presented in *Perspectives* is intended to help clarify issues related to developing such an adaptive process.

As the reader explores the material that follows, try to remember that including students with disabilities is really just an extension of the methods used to teach any student. Planning effective lessons for a very diverse student population means paying attention to individual learning needs. Special education was never intended to be a place, and it was never meant to prevent students with disabilities from participating in general education settings. Both special and general education teachers provide support to help students learn and be successful. Employing adaptive procedures, techniques, and strategies is an essential part of helping all students receive an *appropriate education*.

The Facts

The word "inclusion" is not used in any law relating to education. Support for inclusive practices comes from the federal mandate for educating students in the least restrictive environment. As stated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), each public agency shall ensure,

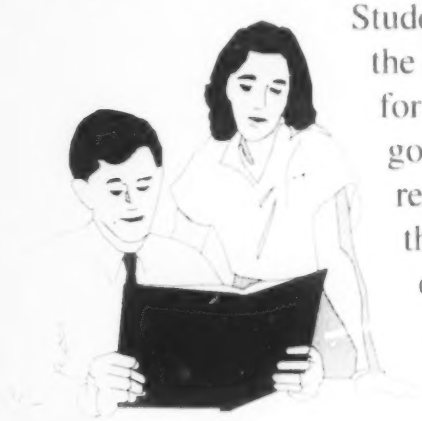
> . . .that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, . . . are educated with children who do not have a disability, and special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (Section 612)

The GOAL

To be "inclusive" is to seek ways for all children, including those with disabilities, to be together while everyone learns. Regardless of the various representations, definitions, interpretations, or models used to present the concept of "inclusion;" it is *the practice of being inclusive*, that represents the underlying ***GOAL*** of the federal mandate to educate students in the least restrictive setting.

What Is The Difference Between, Mainstreaming, Integration, and Inclusion?

Mainstreaming, *integration* and *inclusion* are terms that have been used to represent the evolution of educational practices over the last 15 to 20 years. *Mainstreaming*, a term popular in the mid-1970s, represented the initial effort to have students with and without disabilities learn together.



Students with mild disabilities were the first to be considered eligible for mainstreaming. The primary goal was to return students to regular education for a portion of the day. In most cases, a series of prerequisite skills had to be met before a student could leave the special education classroom to join children without disabilities in the regular classroom. Either few or very simple modifications were made in either the instruction or curriculum for students to be successful.

In the mid-1980's, the term *integration* gained popularity. Integration involved bringing children with disabilities into general education settings whether or not they could master the curriculum being taught. Educating students with more severe disabilities side-by-side with students without disabilities expanded educators' focus beyond academics by examining the social as well as instructional benefits of the

regular class setting. Integration prompted educators to make more dramatic departures from the standard curriculum and instruction, thus bringing attention to effective adaptations.

Inclusion was the next step at refining the instruction of students with disabilities in general education classes. Inclusive education began by assuming that each and every student, regardless of any disability, is part of the whole school community. All students are included when learners with disabilities, or any special educational needs, are made full-time members of regular classrooms. Therefore, students receive whatever supports and services are needed in the context of general education settings.

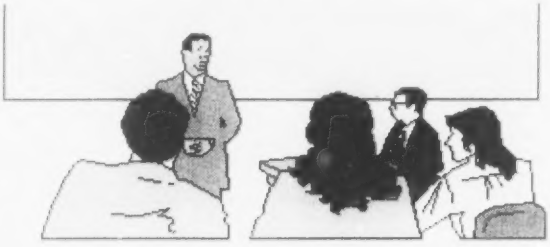
How Does A General Education Teacher Be Successful Including All Students?

To include students with disabilities successfully, general education teachers need a certain amount of flexibility, an interest in new challenges, an appreciation of individual differences, and a willingness to work with other educational staff as members of a team. To collaborate productively, general education teachers must be willing to:

a) listen to and consider the suggestions of other team members,

b) try different approaches, and
c) feel secure having other adults in the classroom.

Typically, teachers who use effective instructional practices can meet the needs of a range of learners, regardless of the students' ability levels. Such educators also enjoy investigating new or innovative teaching methods and techniques. They even may be using such strategies as cooperative learning, whole language, peer partners, and community-based or experiential lessons in their classrooms. In general, teachers who involve students in active learning formats and encourage participation already are practicing elements of inclusive education.



In addition, teachers can become prepared by obtaining information and skills on individualizing lessons, adapting instruction, modifying curricular outcomes, and working in collaborative teams. See Appendix A for a number of resources about inclusive educational practices.

What Is The Role Of The Special Education Teacher When Including A Student With Disabilities In General Education?

The special education teacher identified to provide support to a student with disabilities in a general education classroom will have an expanded role. Working as a member of a team may take some adjustment. While the special education teacher may be an expert in disability-specific information, applying such knowledge

to problem-solve and develop curricular adaptations is often a new experience. Usually special education teachers remain responsible for the:

a) design and implementation of written individual education plans (IEPs);
b) assessment of student performance;
c) provision of instruction, monitoring and consultation to teaching assistants;
d) development of strategies to foster social relationships and involvement in extracurricular activities; and,
e) development of strategies to address particular problems (e.g., a conflict situation involving a student with challenging behaviors).

However, sharing responsibility for students' instructional needs is often less defined. All teachers, including special education teachers, will probably have to alter their roles. While a student may be assigned to a particular general education classroom, the special education teacher must still play a primary role in helping the team determine what curricular or instructional issues exist and how solutions can be provided. For both special education teachers and related service staff, delivery of services will need to shift into general education class environments.

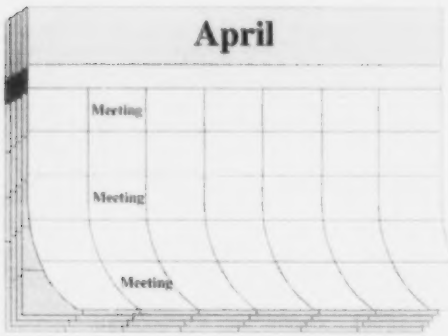
Four Basic Principles for Including All Children

#1 Share Responsibilities As A Team

Functioning as a team means sharing knowledge, communicating ideas, and working together to accomplish objectives. No one team member alone should be responsible for designing and implementing curricular adaptations. General educators, special educators and related services personnel must act collaboratively, bringing individual expertise to the process of problem solving. When students with special needs are successfully included, it is because the team owned both the goal and the responsibility for carrying out instruction.

Research in a variety of different fields has shown that group decision-making often takes longer and may produce conflict. However, research also has shown that groups are able to deal with challenges and make decisions that are more productive than when individuals function alone. For a team of educators to experience success in group decision-making, everyone involved will need to be prepared to participate in conflict resolution and to develop good negotiating skills. The results will improve cooperation and sharing of responsibilities among all who take part in the decision-making process.

#2 Meet On A Regular Basis



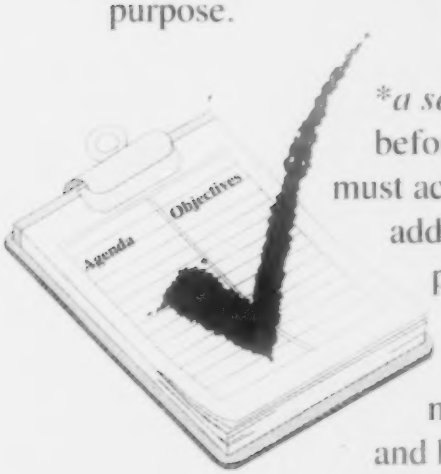
Part of working as a team involves running efficient and productive meetings. One approach uses a five-step framework: a purpose, an agenda, time limits, information and objectives. Regardless of the overall goal, every meeting should have these elements:

* *a definite and concise purpose.* Many meetings are held as a matter of habit. Always remind the team of the purpose, even if meetings are held on a regularly scheduled basis.

* *a specific agenda.* This means a written outline of the meeting topics. It is best if such a list can be provided in advance of the meeting. Or, the team can set the agenda at the beginning of the meeting by reviewing past issues and determining high priority topics.

* *an exact time limit.* Inform team members when meetings will begin and end. Then identify how much time each agenda item will be allotted. Without established timelines, meetings and participants may wander from point to point.

** a defined base of information.* Before meetings begin, team members need to know the rules, the roles, the responsibilities, and the desired results. Unless participants understand the tools necessary to function successfully in meetings, they will not accomplish the assigned purpose.



**a set of objectives.* Know beforehand the outcome the team must achieve for each agenda item. In addition, at every meeting, participants should understand: 1) the meeting purpose, 2) what questions the meeting should answer, 3) what and how each team member should contribute, and 4) the timelines and time limits that will be observed. See Appendix B for information about working together as a team.

Finally, better meetings can be achieved by critiquing past efforts. This can be done by everyone or by an individual assigned to observe the group process. Crucial questions to ask might include: 1) "Were we prepared?" 2) "Did the meeting follow the agenda and timelines?" 3) "Did everyone participate and contribute?" and 4) "Did everyone understand their responsibilities?" See Appendix C for more information on effective meeting strategies.

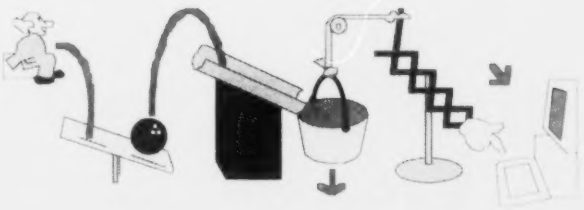
1) "Were we prepared?"

#3 Develop Priorities And Plans

Targeting appropriate outcomes for individual students begins by clearly defining priorities and then designing the action plans to achieve those goals. Teachers who are working to develop effective educational opportunities for students with diverse learning needs, should gather information that reflects: a) student preferences, b) family choices, c) age and community needs, d) past experiences, and e) educational staff input. Constructing successful learning experiences means first understanding the student. After a student profile is developed, the team can focus on educational issues and decide how to help the student be an active and engaged learner. See Appendix D to better understand the process of developing plans to include students with special needs.

Developing methods to include a student with special needs, means taking educational priorities and turning them into a plan of action. The first step is to inventory the general education curriculum and instructional approach. This includes analyzing what is expected of the other students in the classroom. Next, the team reviews the student's profile and IEP goals (e.g., learning style needs and communication objectives). Finally, student specific expectations and outcomes are outlined. Here the team applies its knowledge about the student and the general education classroom, to the way learning activities will need to be adapted. See Appendix E for adaptive strategies and options that can be used to modify general education curriculum and instruction.

#4 Consider All Ways Of Adapting Activities



To include students successfully, teams must learn to set priorities and create plans, but they must also create adaptive alternatives. A basic approach to adapting curriculum and instruction includes: 1) getting to know the individual student, 2) understanding the general education environment and schedule, 3) analyzing classroom activities and learning experiences, and 4) determining what adaptive measures will support active and informed participation by the student.

Adapting can occur by making use of:

a) different instructional groupings;
b) active lesson formats;
c) different environmental conditions which may include, additional materials, unique instructional devices, and/or changes to a specific student's learning outcomes; and,
d) varying levels of support from various team members and other students.

It is important to remember that adapting is useful with all students, and can be implemented for a variety of purposes. Reasons to adapt might include: 1) increasing a student's level of participation, 2) accommodating a greater range of student ability levels, 3) reducing the need for individual assistance, 4) encouraging social opportunities and exchanges, and 5) expanding a student's understanding of presented information.

Appendix A

Resources on Inclusive Programming

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Appendix B

Goals, Roles, and Process

Commitment to the use of goals, roles, and process helps individuals to work as a team. These components will assist team members to understand any meeting purpose, team member roles during the meeting, and how a meeting agenda can be completed.

Goal

The goal of a meeting is made up of two parts. One part is telling what the end result will be after the meeting has been completed. The other part is the purpose of the meeting. A goal usually can be written in one sentence but, if necessary, can have subparts.

Roles

Roles are assigned and described so team members understand their responsibilities during the meeting. In collaborative teaming, roles often include a facilitator, a timekeeper, a recorder, a reporter, and a consensus builder.

Process

The process is a step-by-step description of the tasks team members need to do in order to meet the goal. The steps are listed in a sequential order. When completed, it looks like a recipe that identifies the ingredients needed to finish the task and the order in which ingredients should be added. This process often is summarized in an action plan (sample follows).

Action Plan

An action plan is a document in which activities, persons responsible to implement the activities, and the timelines in which the activities are to occur are written during the meeting. In other words, *what* needs to be done, *who* is going to do the activities, and *when* do the activities happen. Each meeting begins and ends with the action plan. Activities listed on the action plan should be revisited at the beginning of each meeting to review progress made, activities that need to be changed, or activities that need to be continued. The action plan should be summarized at the end of each meeting. Summarizing activities gives team members a reminder to carry out their responsibilities.

ACTION PLAN Date _____

Tasks To Be Completed	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline

Appendix C

Meeting Effectiveness Checklist

- ✓ Was the agenda clearly outlined? Did it include timelines, and identify the team member responsible for each item?
- ✓ Did the facilitator check before beginning the meeting to be sure all additional items were added?
- ✓ Did the timekeeper use assigned time limits on each agenda item to monitor the group's progress?
- ✓ Did everyone participate during the meeting?
- ✓ Did the facilitator encourage input from all team members, check for understanding, summarize decisions at the end of each agenda item, and at closing?
- ✓ Was an action plan or curricular adaptation plan completed by the end of the meeting?
- ✓ Was a next meeting scheduled as an agenda item?
- ✓ Was the action plan or curricular adaptation plan reviewed at the beginning of the meeting to talk about successes, what still needs to be changed, and what needs to continue?

Appendix D

Planning To Include Students

One way to plan for including all students, is to design curricular adaptations by following a process comprised of six essential stages:

1. Begin by establishing a collaborative team approach. Decide on procedures that recognize individual team member expertise but stress shared roles and responsibilities.

2. Obtain information about the student's strengths, preferences, needs, and learning style. Seek out information from parents and family members, various educational persons, and same age peers.

3. Determine typical practices in the general education environment. Note both the daily and weekly schedule, the range and complexity of curriculum to be covered in the classroom, the usual instructional arrangements and lesson formats, class management procedures, the social milieu, materials and media used regularly during class activities, evaluation methods, and the physical layout of the classroom.

4. Once initial information about the student and general education setting have been gathered, the student should be observed in the classroom context. These observations are to help determine *where* and

when adaptations will be needed. These observations should focus on activities that occur fairly regularly each day.

5. After specific difficulties have been identified, ideas for adaptations must be generated. In general, adaptations should increase the student's level of participation, reduce problems understanding information, and help accomplish stated learning objectives (e.g., IEP goals). Developing adaptations often requires trial and error, time and patience. The team must make an educated guess as to the probable reason for an underlying problem. Then an adaptation or combination of adaptive strategies must be developed, tested, and refined over time.

6. Working as a team and developing different adaptive measures requires ongoing communication between all team members. Including students with disabilities is really a problem-solving process. There must be time to plan, time to implement, and time to evaluate what works and what doesn't.

Appendix E

Strategies To Adapt Curriculum

The majority of curricular adaptations address either the way instruction is arranged or delivered, the way the student participates in the activity, or some combination of the two. After a student with disabilities is identified as having difficulty taking part in a general education activity, changes may take place at one or more of the following levels:

Adapting Class Arrangement

* ***instructional groupings or arrangements***

There are typically seven different arrangements used to organize groups of students during lessons. These include: 1) large or whole group, 2) teacher-directed small group, 3) student-directed small group, 4) cooperative learning groups, 5) peer tutor or partner, 6) one-to-one teacher-student, and 7) independent seat work.

Adapting The Lesson

****lesson formats***

Students engage in learning through the following lesson formats: 1) lecture & demonstration, 2) whole-class inquiry or discussion, 3) games, simulations, role-playing, presentations, and activity-based lessons, and 4) experiential lessons.

Adapting For The Student With Disabilities

* ***environmental conditions***

Environmental conditions involve the learning circumstances. Here, issues may include: a) lighting, b) noise, c) visual or auditory distractions, d) physical layout, and e) accessibility to, or availability of specialized equipment.

* ***learning outcomes***

Individualizing learning outcomes is another way to adapt within the context of a general education activity. Here, goals and activity objectives may vary for one or more students depending on the need to match unique needs and skills.

instructional materials*

Changing the form in which information is presented can occur in many ways. These include making materials more manipulable, concrete, tangible, or simplified to match a particular student's learning style or comprehension level.

creating an alternative activity*

Alternative activities occur when other adaptive changes cannot be made successfully. Such activities are typically activity-based or experiential in nature. An alternative activity should still be: a) similar to the lesson content of other students in the class, b) meaningful for all the students involved, c) arranged so as not to need additional adult supervision, and d) planned to involve the student with disabilities with a partner or small group of non-disabled peers.

Adapting the Support

personal support or assistance

Personal support to a student occurs whenever an adult or peer provides some level of assistance. Such support may take the form of direct instruction, monitoring behavior, prompting a response, supplying directions, or giving physical help. Whether the support is provided by a specialist, general educator, or peer it should be carefully analyzed and given only when needed.